

Legal Authorization

FLEP is the Forest Land Enhancement Program, authorized under title VIII of the 2002 US Farm Bill.

FLEP is intended to improve the practice of sustainable forestry on private land through the enhancement and restoration of forest resources.

FLEP accomplishes its goals through a combined investment in technical assistance, educational assistance and cost-share repayment.

Eligibility Requirements

Any landowner with 5 or more acres of forest land or land suitable for establishing forests may receive cost-share. Each approved practice must be a minimum of one acre in size. The landowner must agree to follow the prescriptions in her/his Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) and maintain the practices for 10 years.

If the property is sold and the new owner fails to maintain the practice, the original owner can be held accountable for repayment of the cost-share amount. Landowners selling their property with installed practices should work with an attorney to modify the sale contract to inform the buyers and protect the practices. Participants may not receive more than \$5,000 in FLEP cost share payments in any given year or \$25,000 total through 2007. All approved cost share practices must be in accordance with a FSP, except FLEP 1. Cost share for developing a Forest Stewardship Plan is only



available when all forest land or land suitable for establishing forest within a contiguous ownership is included. Properties that are crossed by roads, water bodies, utility corridors, etc., are considered contiguous. A person who has a long-term lease or easement on a given parcel of land may participate in the program provided that the lease covers the 10-years that they are required to maintain the practices.

Eligible Practices

A variety of practices are available to aid in forest and wildlife management including the following:

FLEP 1 - Forest Stewardship Planning: Develop a Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) or upgrade an existing plan to meet Maryland Forest Service (MFS) approved standards. Plans may be prepared by private consultant foresters with a cost-share rate of 75% of actual costs for new plans or upgraded plans not to exceed established program maximum rates. A forest stewardship plan or acceptable management plan must be prepared. All plans must be approved by the MFS before the landowner is eligible for other FLEP practices.

FLEP 2 -Afforestation or Reforestation: To encourage regeneration of forest cover through site preparation, planting, seeding, fencing, or tree shelters for the purposes of timber or fiber production or carbon sequestration. The planting plan may be part of the FSP. Cost-share rate is

50%. Planting is limited to non-invasive species and cannot be used for orchard, ornamental, nursery, or Christmas tree purposes.

FLEP 3 - Forest Stand Improvement: To enhance growth and quality of forestland. The cost-share rate of 50% is appropriate for activities such as: thinning, cull removal, or grapevine removal. Marking will be an approved silvicultural prescription. Crop tree release is an eligible activity when following the Forest Stewardship Plan.

FLEP 4 – Agroforestry: To enhance combined agricultural and forestry management practices to include the cultivation of trees in conjunction with agricultural crops. The cost share rate is 50%

FLEP 5 - Water Quality Improvement: To improve or protect water quality, riparian areas, forest wetlands and forest watersheds through the establishment, maintenance, renovation, and/or restoration of approved practices. The cost-share rate of 50% may be used for water control forestry best management practices, design and layout of access corridors, and soil stabilization with plants to restrict erosion and protect water quality.

FLEP 6 - Fish and Wildlife Habitat improvement: To create, protect, or maintain fish and wildlife habitat through establishment, maintenance, and restoration practices. The cost-share rate of 50% may be applied to activities such as: wildlife crop tree release, wild fruit tree maintenance, installing artificial cavities, creating forest openings, establishing streamside vegetation, enhancing seeps, and developing food plots.



FLEP 7 - Forest Health Practices: To improve, protect, or restore forest health relative to detection of or damage by insects, diseases, and animals affecting established stands. The cost-share rate of 50% covers practices such as property line boundary marking and maintenance. Gypsy moth spraying in residential areas is prohibited.

FLEP 8 - Invasive Species Control: To limit the spread of invasive species in forested environments through eradication or management practices that support the forest owner's management goals. The cost-share rate of 50% can support practices of mechanical removal or chemical control. Chemical or biological controls must adhere to label guidelines. This practice is not for orchard, ornamental, nursery, or Christmas tree purposes.

FLEP 9 - Wildfire and Catastrophic Risk Reduction includes practices to safeguard homes in rural areas from wildfire. Practices include removal of highly flammable vegetation around structures, creating firebreaks, and prescribed burning to reduce fuel loads. Cost share rate is 50%.

FLEP 10 - Wildfire and Catastrophic Event Rehabilitation: To restore and rehabilitate forests following catastrophic natural events such as wildfire, wind, and ice storms. The cost-share rate of 50% includes activities such as stabilizing firebreak soils or burned areas, and tree planting.

The USDA Secretary has requested that FLEP payments be waived as gross income. If the IRS agrees, then FLEP payments do not have to be included as gross income for Federal income tax purposes. FLEP payments must be reported even if they aren't included as gross income.

On a quarterly basis, the State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee (SFSCC) in conjunction with the State Forester reviews FLEP cost share applications and notifies landowners of approvals and denials.

To find out more or to get started in the program contact your local service forester listed in this publication.

For additional information contact your local forester.

Western Regional Office	301-777-5818
Allegany County	301-777-5590
Frederick County	301-473-8417
Garrett County	301-334-3296
Washington County	301-791-4733

Eastern Regional Office	410-543-6745
Kent & Queen Anne's Counties	410-819-4120
	410-778-4439
Caroline & Talbot Counties	410-479-1623
Wicomico County	410-543-1950
Dorchester County	410-228-1861
Worcester County	410-749-2206
Somerset County	410-651-2004

Central Regional Office	410-836-4551
Baltimore County	410-665-5820
Carroll County	410-848-9290
Cecil County	410-287-5777
Harford County	410-836-4579
Montgomery County	301-854-6060
Howard County	410-442-2080

Southern Regional Office	301-475-4755
Charles County	301-934-2543
Anne Arundel County	410-360-8421
Prince George's County	301-888-9214
Calvert County	410 535-1303
St. Mary's County	301-475-8551

photos: K.A. King, USFWS, Jack Perdue, MD DNR FS, and Tom Eagle, USFWS

November 2003

The facilities and services of the Department of Natural Resources are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, physical or mental disability.

This document is available in alternative format upon request from a qualified individual with a disability.



Maryland
Department of Natural Resources
Forest Service
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401
www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/
1-877-620-8DNR x8531

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor
Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor
C. Ronald Franks, Secretary
W. P. Jensen, Deputy Secretary
Steven W. Koehn, Director